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PACM065

THE BUDAPEST QUARTET

JOSEF ROISMANN (1900-1974), 1st VIOLIN
ALEXANDER SCHNEIDER (1908-1993), 2ND VIOLIN
BORIS KROYT (1897-1969), VIOLA
MISCHA SCHNEIDER (1904-1985), CELLO

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

COMPACT
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PACM065

Ravel - String Quartet in F major (1903)

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (8:08)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Assez vif (5:57)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Très lent (8:44)
- 4 4th mvt. - Vif et agité (5:23)

Recorded 8th September 1940, Liederkranz Hall, New York

Issued as Columbia 78s M-425

And on LP: Columbia ML 4091 / ML 4668, Philips A 01 606 R (10")

Transfer and restoration from Philips LP by Andrew Rose

LP kindly supplied from the collection of Jean-François Lambert

Debussy - String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10 (1893)

- 3 1st mvt. - Animé et très décidé (6:23)
- 6 2nd mvt. - Assez vif et bien rythmé (3:49)
- 7 3rd mvt. - Andantino, doucement expressif (8:37)
- 8 4th mvt. - Très modéré - En animant peu à peu - Très mouvementé et avec passion (7:10)

Recorded 10th-12th December 1940, Liederkranz Hall, New York

Issued as Columbia 78s Columbia M 467 / DDX 5-45 - 48 (England)

And on LP: Columbia ML 4018 / ML 4668

Transfer and restoration from ML 4668 by Dr. John Dufy

Further restoration and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, April-May 2009

Budapest Quartet discographic information from Youngrok Lee's music page:

<http://fischerhosting.paran.com/music/Budapest/discography-budapestsq.htm>

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Josef Roismann

Total duration: 54:11 ©2009 Pristine Audio.

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RAVEL AND DEBUSSY QUARTETS

THE BUDAPEST STRING QUARTET

Maurice Ravel completed his String quartet in F major in early April 1903 at the age of 28. Dedicated to his friend and teacher Gabriel Fauré, the work was introduced in Paris by the Heymann Quartet on March 5, 1904. The quartet follows a strict four movement classical structure: Moderato très doux begins as a sonata form allegro, the following Assez vif-Très rythmé functions as the quartet's scherzo, while Très lent acts as a contrasting foil. The last movement, Vif et agité, reintroduces themes from the earlier passages and ends with a striking finale.

The Quartet in F major was Ravel's final submission to the Prix de Rome and the Conservatoire de Paris. The composition was rejected by both institutions soon after its premier on March 5, 1904. The quartet received mixed reviews from the Parisian press and local academia. Gabriel Fauré, to whom the work is dedicated, described the last movement as "stunted, badly balanced, in fact a failure." Ravel himself commented on the work, "My Quartet in F major responds to a desire for musical construction, which undoubtedly is inadequately realized but which emerges much more clearly than in my preceding compositions." As a result of major criticism and rejection, a frustrated Ravel left the Conservatoire in 1905 following what was later called the Ravel Affair.

Ravel's loss during the 1904 Prix de Rome and rejection from the Conservatoire de Paris catapulted his career forward: a sympathetic public rallied behind his compositions and musical style. Claude Debussy wrote Ravel in 1905, "*In the name of the Gods of music and in my own, do not touch a single note you have written in your Quartet.*" Ravel's string Quartet in F major stands as one of the most widely performed chamber music works in the classical repertoire, representing Ravel's early genius and rise from obscurity.

Claude Debussy wrote his sole String Quartet in G minor, opus 10 in 1893. The previous year Debussy had abandoned the opera Rodrigue et Chimène. He planned to write two string quartets only one of which materialized. The quartet received its premiere on December 29, 1893 by the Ysaye Quartet at the Société Nationale in Paris to mixed reactions.

The Budapest Quartet was formed in 1917 by four friends, all members of opera orchestras that had ceased playing owing to World War I. The quartet was established with quite forward-looking rules:

1. All disputes, musical or business, were to be resolved by a vote. In case of a tie--no change.
2. Players were not allowed to take engagements outside the quartet.
3. Players were paid equally--no preference was given for the leader (first violin).
4. No wives or girlfriends were permitted at rehearsals or discussions.

Since 1925 they had been making recordings for His Master's Voice, first at the Beethoven Saal in Berlin, then at Abbey Road Studio in London and from 1938 at Camden, New Jersey for RCA Victor, the US subsidiary of HMV. The HMV contract was valid until June 1940. It was not paying well and RCA had a good stock of recordings not yet published. They were not keen to make any more recordings in 1939. The quartet found it difficult to persuade RCA to give them as much work as they wanted or to pay them as their new reputation might justify. RCA were also in no hurry to extend the existing contract. The quartet felt that with their increasing reputation in the US they could do better with Columbia Recording Company. Columbia were delighted to sign a deal and make as many recordings as the quartet wished as they had no existing stock. The deal was made and kept secret as long as possible. When they finally learned about it RCA wrote, "*We are astonished...close to a definite breach of faith*". They should have realised that that they had no right to be the only negotiators in a deal. Over 35 years the quartet recorded 89 pieces, some of them several times. For many years it was Columbia's leading classical music seller, quite a loss to RCA.

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM